

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 AID-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 EB-03 OMB-01 SY-03 RSR-01

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P 150930 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3235

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 10778

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF ECONOMY TRIP TO U. S.

JOINT STATE/ AID MESSAGE

1. LATE JUNE 14, MINISTER OF ECONOMY NGOC TALKED WITH AID DIRECTOR AND ACTING ECONOMIC COUNSELOR. HE SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO LEAVE FOR THE U. S. ON SATURDAY, JUNE 16, FOR A TRIP WHICH WILL TAKE HIM AROUND THE WORLD AND LAST ABOUT 12 DAYS. PRIMARY OBJECT OF THE TRIP IS TO ESTABLISH A PROCUREMENT OFFICE IN THE U. S. FOR THE GVN. THIS OFFICE WILL PROCURE COMMODITIES FOR ALL GVN AGENCIES. NGOC WILL ALSO GO FOR BRIEF VISIT TO BATON ROUGE AT INVITATION REPRESENTATIVE OTTO PASSMAN. NGOC WILL GO FIRST TO BATON ROUGE AND ARRIVE WASHINGTON THURSDAY, JUNE 21, ON EASTERN AIRLINES FLIGHT 906, AT 2154 HOURS. AFTER LEAVING U. S. HE PLANS TO MAKE A STOP IN ENGLAND TO VISIT HIS DAUGHTER WHO IS IN SCHOOL THERE. HE HAD EARLIER PLANNED VISIT FRANCE FOR DISCUSSION FRENCH CREDIT BUT THAT NOW CANCELLED AS FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES VISITNG SAIGON END OF JUNE.

2. HE COMMENTED AT SOME LENGTH ON HIS OWN POSITION IN THE GVN AND HIS PERSONAL STRATEGY. HE SAID THAT WHILE AT FIRST SHAKEN BY ANH' S APPOINTMENT TO NATIONAL COUNCIL SECRETARIAT POSITION, HE
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NOW BELIEVES THIS IS A TRANSIENT PHASE, AND THAT HE WILL EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO REASSERT LEADERSHIP. WHAT HE NEEDS NOW, HE SAID, IS A PERIOD OF RELAXED TENSION, IN WHICH HE WILL ENDEAVOR NOT TO OVER-REACT TO ANH APPOINTMENT. HE WILL TRY TO MEND FENCES WITH COLLEAGUES AND MINIMIZE CASUALTIES IN BUREAUCRATIC DISPUTES. HE THINKS HE SHOULD PLAY A PARTICULARLY RESERVED ROLE UNTIL NEW U. S. AMBASSADOR HAS SETTLED IN AND ASSESSED SITUATION. NGOC THINKS THAT HIS ENEMIES, AMONG WHOM HE LISTS EX- GOVERNOR HANH, MIN PLANNING ANH, AND NEDF CHIEF DR. HAO, MAY HAVE HURT HIM BY PLAYING ON THEME OF HIS POWER AND HIS CLOSE SUPPORT FROM U. S. MISSION, JAPANESE EMBASSY, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, ETC. PRESIDENT MAY HAVE WISHED TO PUSH HIM BACK DOWN A BIT. HIS RESPONSE WOULD BE TO SHOW THAT " I WORK FOR THE PRESIDENT; HE DOESN' T WORK FOR ME."

3. WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE DLF LOAN, NGOC SAW NO DIFFICULTY IN THE WAY OF COMPLETING NEGOTIATIONS AND SIGNATURE IN HIS ABSENCE SHOULD THAT BE NECESSARY. HE SAID THAT MINISTER OF FINANCE WILL BE EMPOWERED TO HANDLE THIS.

4. HE BRIEFLY SHOWED US CABLE RECEIVED FROM GOVERNOR HANH WHICH DESCRIBES BLOBEL REPORT TO IBRD. BLOBEL BECAUSE OF CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY PROBLEMS APPARENTLY SUGGESTED DELAY IN FORMATION OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL RESERVES. BLOBEL QUOTED AS SAYING THAT VIETNAM SITUATION WAS " NOT AN EMERGENCY." NGOC WAS FURIOUS WITH SOME OF THE WORDING AND EXPRESSED HIMSELF BITTERLY ABOUT THE " INTELLECTUAL PATERNALISM" OF THE IMF AND IBRD, CONCLUDING, HOWEVER, BY ADMITTING THAT THE GVN NEEDS THEM AND MUST GET ALONG WITH THEM.

5. HE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THOMASSEN AS IMF REPRESENTATIVE IN SAIGON. HE SAID THAT THOMASSEN IS STRONG AND INDEPENDENT- MINDED AND LIKELY TO BE SYMPATHETIC AFTER HE HAS BECOME FULLY ACQUAINTED WITH SITUATION HERE. HE THINKS THOMASSEN WILL NOT TOLERATE INTERFERENCE FROM HANH.

WHITEHOUSE

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